

CHAPTER IV

THE STRIFE WHICH SIBYLL HAD COURTED, BETWEEN KATHERINE AND HERSELF, COMMENCES IN SERIOUS EARNEST

Hastings felt relieved when, the next day, several couriers arrived, with tidings so important as to merge all considerations into those of state. A secret messenger from the French court threw Gloucester into one of those convulsive passions of rage, to which, with all his intellect and dissimulation, he was sometimes subject—by the news of Anne's betrothal to Prince Edward; nor did the letter from Clarence to the king, attesting the success of one of his schemes, comfort Richard for the failure of the other. A letter from Burgundy confirmed the report of the spy, announced Duke Charles's intention of sending a fleet to prevent Warwick's invasion, and rated King Edward sharply for his supineness in not preparing suitably against so formidable a foe. The gay and reckless presumption of Edward, worthier of a knight-errant than a monarch, laughed at the word *Invasion*. "Pest on Burgundy's ships! I only wish that the earl would land!"* he said to his council. None echoed the wish! But later in the day came a third messenger with information that roused all Edward's ire; careless of each danger in the distance, he ever sprang into energy and vengeance when a foe was already in the field. And the Lord Fitzhugh (the young nobleman before seen among the rebels at Olney, and who had now succeeded to the honours of his house) had sud-

* Com. iii. c. 5.

denly risen in the north, at the head of a formidable rebellion. No man had so large an experience in the warfare of those districts, the temper of the people, and the inclinations of the various towns and lordships as Montagu; he was the natural chief to depute against the rebels. Some animated discussion took place as to the dependence to be placed in the marquis at such a crisis; but while the more wary held it safer, at all hazards, not to leave him unemployed, and to command his services in an expedition that would remove him from the neighbourhood of his brother, should the latter land, as was expected, on the coast of Norfolk, Edward, with a blindness of conceit that seems almost incredible, believed firmly in the infatuated loyalty of the man whom he had slighted and impoverished, and whom, by his offer of his daughter to the Lancastrian prince, he had yet more recently cozened and deluded. Montagu was hastily summoned, and received orders to march at once to the north, levy forces and assume their command. The marquis obeyed with fewer words than were natural to him—left the presence, sprang on his horse, and as he rode from the palace, drew a letter from his bosom. "Ah, Edward," said he, setting his teeth; "so, after the solemn betrothal of thy daughter to my son, thou wouldst have given her to thy Lancastrian enemy. Coward, to bribe his peace!—recreant, to belie thy word! I thank thee for this news, Warwick; for without that injury I feel I could never, when the hour came, have drawn sword against this faithless man,—especially for Lancaster. Ay, tremble, thou who deridest all truth and honour! He who himself betrays, cannot call vengeance treason!"

Meanwhile, Edward departed, for farther prepara-

tions, to the Tower of London. New evidences of the mine beneath his feet here awaited the incredulous king. On the door of St. Paul's, of many of the metropolitan churches, on the Standard at Chepe, and on London Bridge, during the past night, had been affixed, none knew by whom, the celebrated proclamation, signed by Warwick and Clarence (drawn up in the bold style of the earl), announcing their speedy return, containing a brief and vigorous description of the misrule of the realm, and their determination to reform all evils and redress all wrongs.* Though the proclamation named not the restoration of the Lancastrian line (doubtless from regard for Henry's safety), all men in the metropolis were already aware of the formidable league between Margaret and Warwick. Yet, even still, Edward smiled in contempt, for he had faith in the letter received from Clarence, and felt assured that the moment the duke and the earl landed, the former would betray his companion stealthily to the king; so, despite all these exciting subjects of grave alarm, the nightly banquet at the Tower was never merrier and more joyous. Hastings left the feast ere it deepened into revel, and, absorbed in various and profound contemplation, entered his apartment. He threw himself on a seat, and leant his face on his hands.

"Oh, no—no!" he muttered, "now, in the hour when true greatness is most seen—when prince and peer crowd around me for counsel—when noble, knight, and squire, crave permission to march in the troop of which Hastings is the leader—*now* I feel how impossible, how falsely fair, the dream that I could forget all—all for a life of obscurity—for a young girl's

* See, for this proclamation, Ellis's "Original Letters," vol. i., second series, Letter 42.

love! Love! as if I had not felt its delusions to palling! love, as if I could love again: or, if love—alas, it must be a light reflected but from memory! And Katherine is free once more!" His eye fell as he spoke, perhaps in shame and remorse that, feeling thus now, he had felt so differently when he bade Sibyll smile till his return!

"It is the air of this accursed court which taints our best resolves!" he murmured, as an apology for himself; but scarcely was the poor excuse made, than the murmur broke into an exclamation of surprise and joy. A letter lay before him—he recognised the hand of Katherine. What years had passed since her writing had met his eye, since the lines that bade him "farewell, and forget!" *Those* lines had been blotted with tears, and *these*, as he tore open the silk that bound them—*these*, the trace of tears, too, was on them! Yet they were but few, and in tremulous characters. They ran thus:—

"To-morrow, before noon, the Lord Hastings is prayed to visit one whose life he hath saddened by the thought and the accusation that she hath clouded and embittered his.

"KATHERINE DE BONVILLE."

Leaving Hastings to such meditations of fear or of hope, as these lines could call forth, we lead the reader to a room not very distant from his own—the room of the illustrious Friar Bungey.

The ex-tregetour was standing before the captured Eureka, and gazing on it with an air of serio-comic despair and rage. We say the Eureka, as comprising all the ingenious contrivances towards one single object invented by its maker, an harmonious compound

of many separate details;—but the iron creature no longer deserved that superb appellation, for its various members were now disjointed and dislocated, and lay pell-mell in multiform confusion.

By the side of the friar stood a female, enveloped in a long scarlet mantle, with the hood partially drawn over the face, but still leaving visible the hard, thin, villanous lips, the stern, sharp chin, and the jaw resolute and solid as if hewed from stone.

“I tell thee, Graul,” said the friar, “that thou hast had far the best of the bargain. I have put this diabolical contrivance to all manner of shapes, and have muttered over it enough Latin to have charmed a monster into civility. And the accursed thing, after nearly pinching off three fingers, and scalding me with seething water, and spluttering and spluttering enough to have terrified any man but Friar Bungey out of his skin, is *obstinatus ut mulus*—dogged as a mule; and was absolutely good for nought, till I happily thought of separating this vessel from all the rest of the gear, and it serves now for the boiling my eggs! But by the soul of Father Merlin, whom the saints assoil, I need not have given myself all this torment for a thing which, at best, does the work of a farthing pipkin!”

“Quick, master; the hour is late! I must go while yet the troopers and couriers, and riders, hurrying to and fro, keep the gates from closing. What wantest thou with Graul?”

“More reverence, child!” growled the friar. “What I want of thee is briefly told, if thou hast the wit to serve me. This miserable Warner must himself expound to me the uses and trick of his malignant contrivance. Thou must find and bring him hither!”

“And if he will not expound?”

“The deputy-governor of the Tower will lend me a stone dungeon, and, if need be, the use of the brake to unlock the dotard’s tongue.”

“On what plea?”

“That Adam Warner is a wizard, in the pay of Lord Warwick, whom a more mighty master like myself alone can duly examine and defeat.”

“And if I bring thee the sorcerer—what wilt thou teach me in return?”

“What desirest thou most?”

Graul mused and said, “There is war in the wind. Graul follows the camp—her trooper gets gold and booty. But the trooper is stronger than Graul; and when the trooper sleeps it is with his knife by his side, and his sleep is light and broken, for he has wicked dreams. Give me a potion to make sleep deep, that his eyes may not open when Graul filches his gold, and his hand may be too heavy to draw the knife from its sheath!”

“Immunda—detestabilis!—thine own paramour!”

“He hath beat me with his bridle rein, he hath given a silver broad piece to Grisell; Grisell hath sate on his knee; Graul never pardons!”

The friar, rogue as he was, shuddered. “I cannot help thee to murder, I cannot give thee the potion; name some other reward.”

“I go—”

“Nay, nay—think—pause.”

“I know where Warner is hid. By this hour to-morrow night, I can place him in thy power. Say the word, and pledge me the draught.”

“Well, well, *mulier abominabilis!*—that is, irresistible bonnibel. I cannot give thee the potion; but I will teach thee an art which can make sleep heavier than

the anodyne, and which wastes not like the essence, but strengthens by usage; an art thou shalt have at thy fingers' ends, and which often draws from the sleeper the darkest secrets of his heart." *

"It is magic," said Graul, with joy.

"Ay, magic."

"I will bring thee the wizard. But listen; he never stirs abroad, save with his daughter. I must bring both."

"Nay—I want not the girl."

"But I dare not throttle her, for a great lord loves her—who would find out the deed and avenge it; and, if she be left behind, she will go to the lord, and the lord will discover what thou hast done with the wizard, and thou wilt hang!"

"Never say 'Hang' to me, Graul; it is ill-mannered and ominous. Who is the lord?"

"Hastings."

"Pest!—and already he hath been searching for the thing yonder; and I have brooded over it night and day, like a hen over a chalk egg—only that the egg does not snap off the hen's claws, as that diabolism would fain snap off my digits. But the war will carry Hastings away in its whirlwind; and, in danger, the duchess is my slave, and will bear me through all. So, thou mayst bring the girl; and strangle her not; for no good ever comes of a murder,—unless, indeed, it be absolutely necessary!"

"I know the men who will help me, bold *ribauds*, whom I will guerdon myself; for I want not thy coins, but thy craft. When the curfew has tolled, and the bat hunts the moth, we will bring thee the quarry——"

* We have before said that animal magnetism was known to Bungey, and familiar to the necromancers or rather theurgists of the middle ages.

Graul turned—but as she gained the door, she stopped, and said abruptly, throwing back her hood—

"What age dost thou deem me?"

"Marry," quoth the friar—"an' I had not seen thee on thy mother's knee when she followed my stage of Tregetour—I should have guessed thee for thirty, but thou hast led too jolly a life to look still in the blossom—why speer'st thou the question?"

"Because when trooper and *ribaud* say to me—'Graul, thou art too worn and too old to drink of our cup and sit in the lap, to follow the young fere to the battle, and weave the blithe dance in the fair,'—I would depart from my sisters, and have a hut of my own—and a black cat without a white hair, and steal herbs by the new moon, and bones from the charnel—and curse those whom I hate—and cleave the misty air on a besom, like Mother Halkin, of Edmonton. Ha, ha! Master, thou shalt present me then to the *Sabbat*. Graul has the metal for a bonny witch!"

The tymbestere vanished with a laugh. The friar muttered a paternoster for once, perchance, devoutly; and after having again deliberately scanned the *disjecta membra* of the Eureka, gravely took forth a duck's egg from his cupboard, and applied the master-agent of the machine which Warner hoped was to change the face of the globe to the only practical utility it possessed to the mountebank's comprehension.

CHAPTER V

THE MEETING OF HASTINGS AND KATHERINE

The next morning, while Edward was engaged in levying from his opulent citizens all the loans he could extract, knowing that gold is the sinew of war—while Worcester was manning the fortress of the Tower, in which the queen, then near her confinement, was to reside during the campaign—while Gloucester was writing commissions to captains and barons to raise men—while Sir Anthony Lord Rivers was ordering improvements in his dainty damasquine armour—and the whole Fortress Palatine was animated and alive with the stir of the coming strife—Lord Hastings escaped from the bustle, and repaired to the house of Katherine. With what motive, with what intentions, was not known clearly to himself;—perhaps, for there was bitterness in his very love for Katherine, to enjoy the retaliation due to his own wounded pride, and say to the idol of his youth, as he had said to Gloucester—“*Time is—time was;*”—perhaps with some remembrance of the faith due to Sibyll, wakened up the more now that Katherine seemed actually to escape from the ideal image into the real woman—to be easily wooed and won. But, certainly, Sibyll’s cause was not wholly lost, though greatly shaken and endangered, when Lord Hastings alighted at Lady Bonville’s gate; but his face gradually grew paler, his mien less assured, as he drew near and nearer to the apartment and the presence of the widowed Katherine.

She was seated alone, and in the same room in which he had last seen her. Her deep mourning only served,

by contrasting the pale and exquisite clearness of her complexion, to enhance her beauty. Hastings bowed low, and seated himself by her side in silence.

The Lady of Bonville eyed him for some moments with an unutterable expression of melancholy and tenderness. All her pride seemed to have gone; the very character of her face was changed: grave severity had become soft timidity, and stately self-control was broken into the unmistakable struggle of hope and fear.

“Hastings—*William!*” she said, in a gentle and low whisper, and at the sound of that last name from those lips, the noble felt his veins thrill and his heart throb. “If,” she continued, “the step I have taken seems to thee unwomanly and too bold, know, at least, what was my design and my excuse. There was a time” (and Katherine blushed) “when, thou knowest well, that, had this hand been mine to bestow, it would have been his who claimed the half of this ring.” And Katherine took from a small crystal casket the well-remembered token.

“The broken ring foretold but the broken troth,” said Hastings, averting his face.

“Thy conscience rebukes thy words,” replied Katherine, sadly; “I pledged my faith, if thou couldst win my father’s word. What maid, and that maid a Neville, could so forget duty and honour as to pledge thee more? We were severed. Pass—oh, pass over that time! My father loved me dearly; but when did pride and ambition ever deign to take heed of the wild fancies of a girl’s heart? Three suitors, wealthy lords,—whose alliance gave strength to my kindred, in the day when their very lives depended on their swords,—were rivals for Earl Salisbury’s daughter. Earl Salisbury bade his daughter choose. Thy great friend, and my

own kinsman, Duke Richard of York, himself pleaded for thy rivals. He proved to me that my disobedience—if, indeed, for the first time, a child of my house could disobey its chief—would be an eternal barrier to *thy* fortune; that while Salisbury was thy foe, he himself could not advance thy valiancy and merit; that it was with me to forward thy ambition, though I could not reward thy love; that from the hour I was another's, my mighty kinsmen themselves—for they were generous—would be the first to aid the duke in thy career. Hastings, even then I would have prayed, at least, to be the bride, not of man, but God. But I was trained—as what noble demoiselle is not?—to submit wholly to a parent's welfare and his will. As a nun, I could but pray for the success of my father's cause; as a wife, I should bring to Salisbury and to York the retainers and the strongholds of a baron! I obeyed. Hear me on. Of the three suitors for my hand, two were young and gallant—women deemed them fair and comely; and had my choice been one of these, thou mightest have deemed that a new love had chased the old. Since choice was mine, I chose the man *love* could not choose, and took this sad comfort to my heart—'He, the forsaken Hastings, will see, in my very choice, that I was but the slave of duty—my choice itself my penance.'

Katherine paused, and tears dropped fast from her eyes. Hastings held his hand over his countenance, and only by the heaving of his heart was his emotion visible. Katherine resumed:—

"Once wedded, I knew what became a wife. We met again; and to thy first disdain and anger—(which it had been dishonour in me to soothe by one word that said, 'The wife remembers the maiden's love')—to

these, thy first emotions, succeeded the more cruel revenge, which would have changed sorrow and struggle to remorse and shame. And then, then—weak woman that I was—I wrapped myself in scorn and pride. Nay, I felt deep anger—was it unjust?—that thou couldst so misread, and so repay, the heart which had nothing left, save virtue, to compensate for love. And yet, yet, often when thou didst deem me most hard, most proof against memory and feeling—but why relate the trial? Heaven supported me, and if thou lovest me no longer, thou canst not despise me."

At these last words, Hastings was at her feet, bending over her hand, and stifled by his emotions. Katherine gazed at him for a moment through her own tears, and then resumed:—

"But thou hadst, as *man*, consolations no woman would desire or covet. And oh, what grieved me most was, not—no, not the jealous, the wounded vanity, but it was at least this self-accusation, this remorse, that—but for one goading remembrance, of love returned and love forsaken,—thou hadst never so descended from thy younger nature, never so trifled with the solemn trust of TIME. Ah, when I have heard, or seen, or fancied one fault in thy maturer manhood, unworthy of thy bright youth, anger of myself has made me bitter and stern to thee; and if I taunted, or chid, or vexed thy pride, how little didst thou know that through the too shrewish humour spoke the too soft remembrance! For this—for this; and believing that through all, alas! my image was not replaced—when my hand was free, I was grateful that I might still—" (the lady's pale cheek grew brighter than the rose, her voice faltered, and became low and indistinct)—"I might still think it mine to atone to thee for the past. And if," she

added, with a sudden and generous energy, "if in this I have bowed my pride, it is because by pride thou wert wounded; and now, at last, thou hast a just revenge."

O terrible rival for thee, lost Sibyll! Was it wonderful that, while that head drooped upon his breast, while in that enchanted change which Love the softener makes in lips long scornful, eyes long proud and cold, he felt that Katherine Nevile—tender, gentle, frank without boldness, lofty without arrogance—had replaced the austere dame of Bonville, whom he half hated while he wooed,—oh, was it wonderful that the soul of Hastings fled back to the old time, forgot the intervening vows, and more chill affections, and repeated only with passionate lips—"Katherine, loved still, loved ever—mine, mine, at last!"

Then followed delicious silence—then vows, confessions, questions, answers—the thrilling interchange of hearts long divided, and now rushing into one. And time rolled on, till Katherine, gently breaking from her lover, said—

"And now, that thou hast the right to know and guide my projects, approve, I pray thee, my present purpose. War awaits thee, and we must part awhile!" At these words her brow darkened and her lip quivered. "Oh, that I should have lived to mourn the day when Lord Warwick, untrue to Salisbury and to York, joined his arms with Lancaster and Margaret—the day when Katherine could blush for the brother she had deemed the glory of her house! No, no" (she continued, as Hastings interrupted her with generous excuses for the earl, and allusion to the known slights he had received),—"No, no; make not his cause the worse, by telling me that an unworthy pride, the grudge of some thwart to his policy or power, has made him

forget what was due to the memory of his kinsman York, to the mangled corpse of his father Salisbury. Thinkest thou, that but for this, I could——" She stopped, but Hastings divined her thought, and guessed that, if spoken, it had run thus:—"That I could, even now, have received the homage of one who departs to meet, with banner and clarion, my brother as his foe?" The lovely sweetness of the late expression had gone from Katherine's face, and its aspect showed that her high and ancestral spirit had yielded but to one passion. She pursued—

"While this strife lasts, it becomes my widowhood, and kindred position with the earl, to retire to the convent my mother founded. To-morrow I depart."

"Alas!" said Hastings, "thou speakest of the strife as if but a single field. But Warwick returns not to these shores, nor bows himself to league with Lancaster,—for a chance hazardous and desperate, as Edward too rashly deems it. It is in vain to deny that the earl is prepared for a grave and lengthened war, and much I doubt whether Edward can resist his power; for the idolatry of the very land will swell the ranks of so dread a rebel. What if he succeed—what if we be driven into exile, as Henry's friends before us—what if the king-maker be the king-dethroner?—then, Katherine, then once more thou wilt be at the hest of thy hostile kindred, and once more, dowered as thou art, and thy womanhood still in its richest bloom, thy hand will be lost to Hastings."

"Nay, if that be all thy fear, take with thee this pledge—that Warwick's treason to the house for which my father fell, dissolves his power over one driven to disown him as a brother,—knowing Earl Salisbury, had he foreseen such disgrace, had disowned him as a

son. And if there be defeat, and flight, and exile,—wherever thou wanderest, Hastings, shall Katherine be found beside thee—Fare thee well, and Our Lady shield thee—may thy lance be victorious against all foes—save one. Thou wilt forbear my—that is, *the earl!*” And Katherine, softened at that thought, sobbed aloud.

“And come triumph or defeat, I have thy pledge?” said Hastings, soothing her.

“See,” said Katherine, taking the broken ring from the casket; “now, for the first time since I bore the name of Bonville, I lay this relic on my heart—art thou answered?”

CHAPTER VI

HASTINGS LEARNS WHAT HAS BEFALLEN SIBYLL—REPAIRS TO THE KING, AND ENCOUNTERS AN OLD RIVAL

“It is destiny,” said Hastings to himself, when early the next morning he was on his road to the farm—“It is destiny—and who can resist his fate?”

“It is destiny!”—phrase of the weak human heart! “It is destiny!” dark apology for every error! The strong and the virtuous admit *no* destiny! On earth, guides Conscience—in heaven watches God. And Destiny is but the phantom we invoke to silence the one—to dethrone the other!

Hastings spared not his good steed. With great difficulty had he snatched a brief respite from imperious business, to accomplish the last poor duty now left to him to fulfil—to confront the maid whose heart he had seduced in vain, and say, at length, honestly and

firmly—“I cannot wed thee. Forget me, and farewell.”

Doubtless, his learned and ingenious mind conjured up softer words than these, and more purfled periods wherein to dress the iron truth. But in these two sentences the truth lay. He arrived at the farm—he entered the house—he felt it as a reprieve, that he met not the bounding step of the welcoming Sibyll. He sat down in the humble chamber, and waited awhile in patience—no voice was heard. The silence at length surprised and alarmed him. He proceeded farther. He was met by the widowed owner of the house, who was weeping; and her first greeting prepared him for what had chanced. “Oh, my lord, you have come to tell me they are safe—they have not fallen into the hands of their enemies—the good gentleman, so meek—the poor lady, so fair!”

Hastings stood aghast—a few sentences more explained all that he already guessed. A strange man had arrived the evening before at the house, praying Adam and his daughter to accompany him to the Lord Hastings, who had been thrown from his horse, and was now in a cottage in the neighbouring lane—not hurt dangerously, but unable to be removed—and who had urgent matters to communicate. Not questioning the truth of this story, Adam and Sibyll had hurried forth, and returned no more. Alarmed by their long absence, the widow, who had first received the message from the stranger, went herself to the cottage, and found that the story was a fable. Every search had since been made for Adam and his daughter, but in vain. The widow, confirmed in her previous belief that her lodgers had been attainted Lancastrians, could but suppose that they had been thus betrayed

to their enemies. Hastings heard this with a dismay and remorse impossible to express. His only conjecture was, that the king had discovered their retreat, and taken this measure to break off the intercourse he had so sternly denounced. Full of these ideas, he hastily remounted, and stopped not till once more at the gates of the Tower. Hastening to Edward's closet, the moment he saw the king, he exclaimed, in great emotion—"My liege—my liege, do not, at this hour, when I have need of my whole energy to serve thee, do not madden my brain, and palsy my arm. This old man—the poor maid—Sibyll—Warner—speak, my liege—only tell me they are safe—promise me they shall go free, and I swear to obey thee in all else! I will thank thee in the battle-field!"

"Thou art mad, Hastings!" said the king, in great astonishment.—"Hush!" and he glanced significantly at a person who stood before several heaps of gold, ranged upon a table in the recess of the room.—"See," he whispered, "yonder is the goldsmith, who hath brought me a loan from himself and his fellows!—Pretty tales for the city thy folly will send abroad!"

But before Hastings could vent his impatient answer, this person, to Edward's still greater surprise, had advanced from his place, and forgetting all ceremony, had seized Hastings by the hem of his surcoat, exclaiming—

"My lord, my lord—what new horror is this?—Sibyll!—methought she was worthless, and had fled to thee!"

"Ten thousand devils!" shouted the king—"Am I ever to be tormented by that damnable wizard and his witch child? And is it, Sir Peer and Sir Goldsmith, in your king's closet that ye come, the very eve before

he marches to battle, to speer and glower at each other like two madmen as ye are?"

Neither peer nor goldsmith gave way, till the courtier, naturally recovering himself the first, fell on his knee, and said, with firm though profound respect—"Sire, if poor William Hastings has ever merited from the king the kindly thought, one generous word, forgive now whatever may displease thee in his passion or his suit, and tell him what prison contains those whom it would for ever dishonour his knighthood to know punished and endangered but for his offence."

"My lord!" answered the king, softened but still surprised, "think you seriously that I, who but reluctantly, in this lovely month, leave my green lawns of Shene to save a crown, could have been vexing my brain by stratagems to seize a lass—whom I swear by St. George I do not envy thee in the least? If that does not suffice, incredulous dullard, why then take my kingly word, never before passed for so slight an occasion, that I know nothing whatsoever of thy damsel's whereabouts—nor her pestilent father's—where they abode of late—where they now be—and, what is more, if any man has usurped his king's right to imprison the king's subjects, find him out, and name his punishment. Art thou convinced?"

"I am, my liege," said Hastings.

"But—" began the goldsmith.

"Holloa, you, too, sir! This is too much! We have condescended to answer the man who arms three thousand retainers—"

"And I, please your highness bring you the gold to pay them," said the trader, bluntly.

The king bit his lip, and then burst into his usual merry laugh.

"Thou art in the right, Master Alwyn. Finish counting the pieces, and then go and consult with my chamberlain—he must off with the cock-crow—but, since ye seem to understand each other, he shall make thee his lieutenant of search, and I will sign any order he pleases for the recovery of the lost wisdom and the stolen beauty. Go and calm thyself, Hastings."

"I will attend you presently, my lord," said Alwyn, aside, "in your own apartment."

"Do so," said Hastings; and, grateful for the king's consideration, he sought his rooms. There, indeed, Alwyn soon joined him, and learned from the nobleman what filled him at once with joy and terror. Knowing that Warner and Sibyll had left the Tower, he had surmised that the girl's virtue had at last succumbed, and it delighted him to hear from Lord Hastings, whose word to men was never questionable, the solemn assurance of her unstained chastity. But he trembled at this mysterious disappearance, and knew not to whom to impute the snare, till the penetration of Hastings suddenly alighted near, at least, to the clue. "The Duchess of Bedford," said he, "ever increasing in superstition as danger increases, may have desired to refind so great a scholar, and reputed an astrologer and magician—if so, all is safe. On the other hand, her favourite, the friar, ever bore a jealous grudge to poor Adam, and may have sought to abstract him from her grace's search—here, there may be molestation to Adam, but surely no danger to Sibyll. Harkye, Alwyn—thou lovest the maid more worthily, and—" Hastings stopped short—for such is infirm human nature, that, though he had mentally resigned Sibyll for ever, he could not yet calmly face the thought of resigning her to a rival. "Thou lovest her," he renewed, more

coldly, "and to thee, therefore, I may safely trust the search, which time, and circumstance, and a soldier's duty forbid to me. And believe—oh, believe, that I say not this from a passion which may move thy jealousy, but rather with a brother's holy love. If thou canst but see her safe, and lodged where nor danger nor wrong can find her, thou hast no friend in the wide world whose service through life thou mayest command like mine."

"My lord," said Alwyn, drily, "I want no friends! Young as I am, I have lived long enough to see that friends follow fortune, but never make it! I will find this poor maid and her honoured father, if I spend my last groat on the search. Get me but such an order from the king as may place the law at my control, and awe even her Grace of Bedford—and I promise the rest!"

Hastings, much relieved, deigned to press the goldsmith's reluctant hand; and, leaving him alone for a few minutes, returned with a warrant from the king, which seemed, to Alwyn, sufficiently precise and authoritative. The goldsmith then departed, and first he sought the friar, but found him not at home. Bungey had taken with him, as was his wont, the keys of his mysterious apartment. Alwyn then hastened elsewhere, to secure those experienced in such a search, and to head it in person. At the Tower, the evening was passed in bustle and excitement—the last preparations for departure. The queen, who was then far advanced towards her confinement, was, as we before said, to remain at the Tower, which was now strongly manned. Roused from her wonted apathy by the imminent dangers that awaited Edward, the night was passed by her in tears and prayers—by him, in the sound sleep of